



# The Chinese University of Hong Kong Department of Social Work

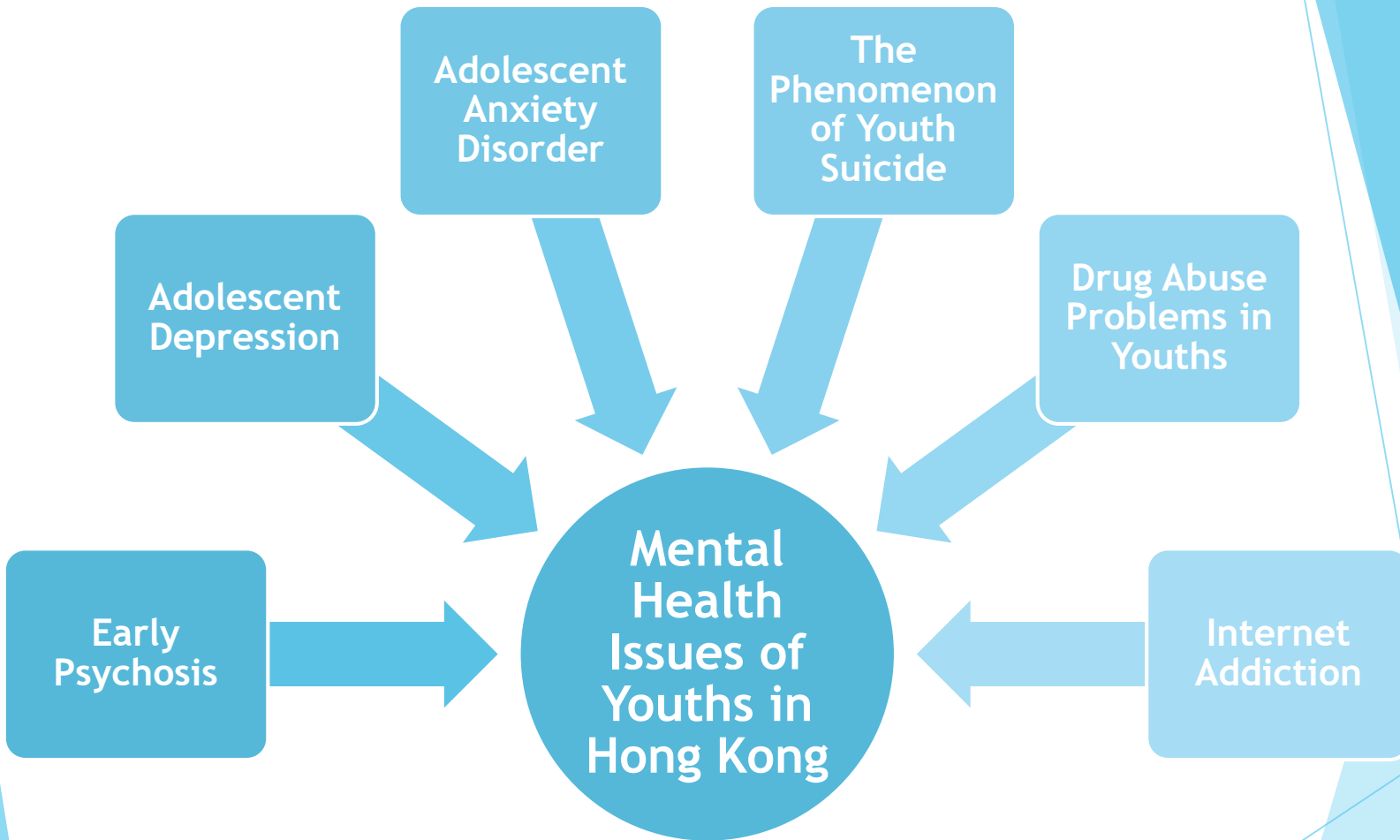
## Holistic Wellness Model for Youths with Mental Health Issues in Hong Kong

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- ▶ Adolescence is an important stage of development in which young people encounter many physical and psychological changes and adaptations. These experiences and challenges also affect how adolescents enter adulthood.
- ▶ Previous researches show that among mentally ill adults, disorder onset for more than 50% was prior to age 24. (Kessler et al., 2005)

# Mental health Issues of Youths in Hong Kong

- ▶ People between the ages of 0 and 19 who were accessed and received treatment numbered 11,141 in 2007-2008, which increased to 12,320 in 2008-2009 (Hospital Authority, 2010).
- ▶ The number of students aged under 18 receiving child and adolescent psychiatric services in the Hospital Authority increased to 26470 in 2014-2015 (Hospital Authority, 2016).



# Early Psychosis

- ▶ Early Assessment Service for Young Persons with Psychosis (EASY) Program,” which has been implemented since 2001, The targets are young people ranging from age 15 to age 25 with first-episode psychosis

- ▶ Over the past 10 years, approximately 700 youths annually, ranging in age from 15 to 25, suffered new cases of early psychosis.
- ▶ As of December 2011, the EASY Program had assessed more than 13,000 people and treated 6,800 people (Hospital Authority 2012).

# Early Psychosis

## Finding

- ▶ It is found that the education system in Hong Kong did not include the care of mentally ill students
- ▶ The teachers in Hong Kong lacked access to relevant training
- ▶ Hong Kong has a great need to increase educational support and medical treatment resources for mental illness among children and youths
- ▶ Family psychosocial education will facilitate the recovery of the youth suffering from early psychosis

- ▶ According to a research conducted by Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service and the Education University of Hong Kong in the year of August 2015, 51% of 10140 secondary school students from Form 1 to Form 6 over three consecutive years had different degrees of depression symptoms, of which nearly 32% were mild depression, about 6.5% had severe depression (Ming Pao, 2015).



# Adolescent Depression

The high level of academic competition and pressure in Hong Kong is worrisome.

academic  
problems :  
**27%**

Primary source  
of stress for  
students

future  
prospects :  
**23%**

# Adolescent Anxiety Disorder

- ▶ Dr. Phyllis Chan Kwok Ling, a representative of the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists and Head of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong, stated in May 2013 that the hospital's psychiatric referrals for children and adolescents had increased threefold in the previous three years, often because of anxiety disorders caused by academic stress
- ▶ In approximately 80% of child and adolescent anxiety disorder patients, the parents themselves also had anxious tendencies, manifesting in the overprotection of their children and affecting the children's opportunities to explore new environments

# Adolescent Anxiety Disorder

Different professionals gave the following suggestions to the parents:

the parents first acknowledge and accept



the children emotional release



the parents discuss solutions



the children participate in the process



**better regain their self-confidence**

## Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention releases latest suicide figures

- ▶ Based on records from the Coroner's Court, in 2015, there were 70 suicide cases of young people aged 15-24, among them 23 were full-time students. CSRP estimated that the suicide rate of this age group was about **8.5 per 100,000, which is higher** compared to the 6.2 per 100,000 in 2014 (The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, 2016)

# The Phenomenon of Youth Suicide

- ▶ Nearly half of the victims revealed their intention to commit suicide prior to the incident via mobile application programs (apps) or social-network sites.



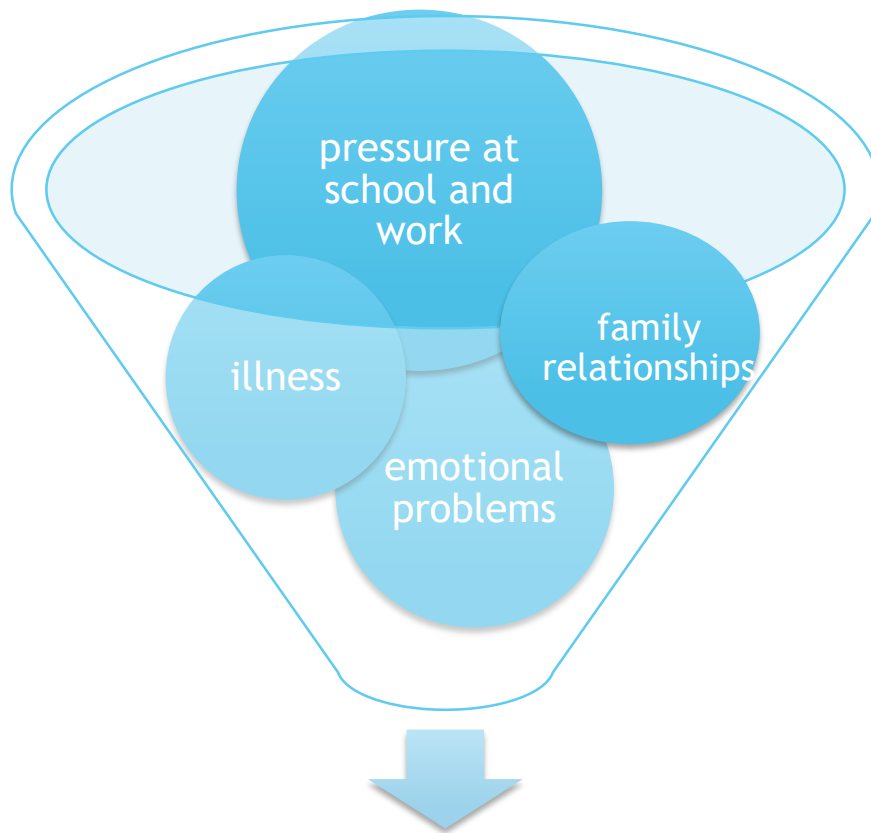
traditional  
face-to-face  
mediation

a variety of  
methods

Entering text into mobile apps and social networks:

- to search for suicide notes, find youths who have attempted to commit suicide
- provide appropriate counseling to prevent tragedies

- ▶ Primary cause: stress created by academic & employment competition



psychological problems

(W. C. Wong, 2013)

# Important tactics for youth suicide prevention

- ▶ Improving mood disorder treatment
- ▶ Youth suicide prevention included increasing parents' conceptual understanding of suicide and mood disorders in young people
- ▶ Enhancing teachers' ability to engage in early detection of suicide risk.

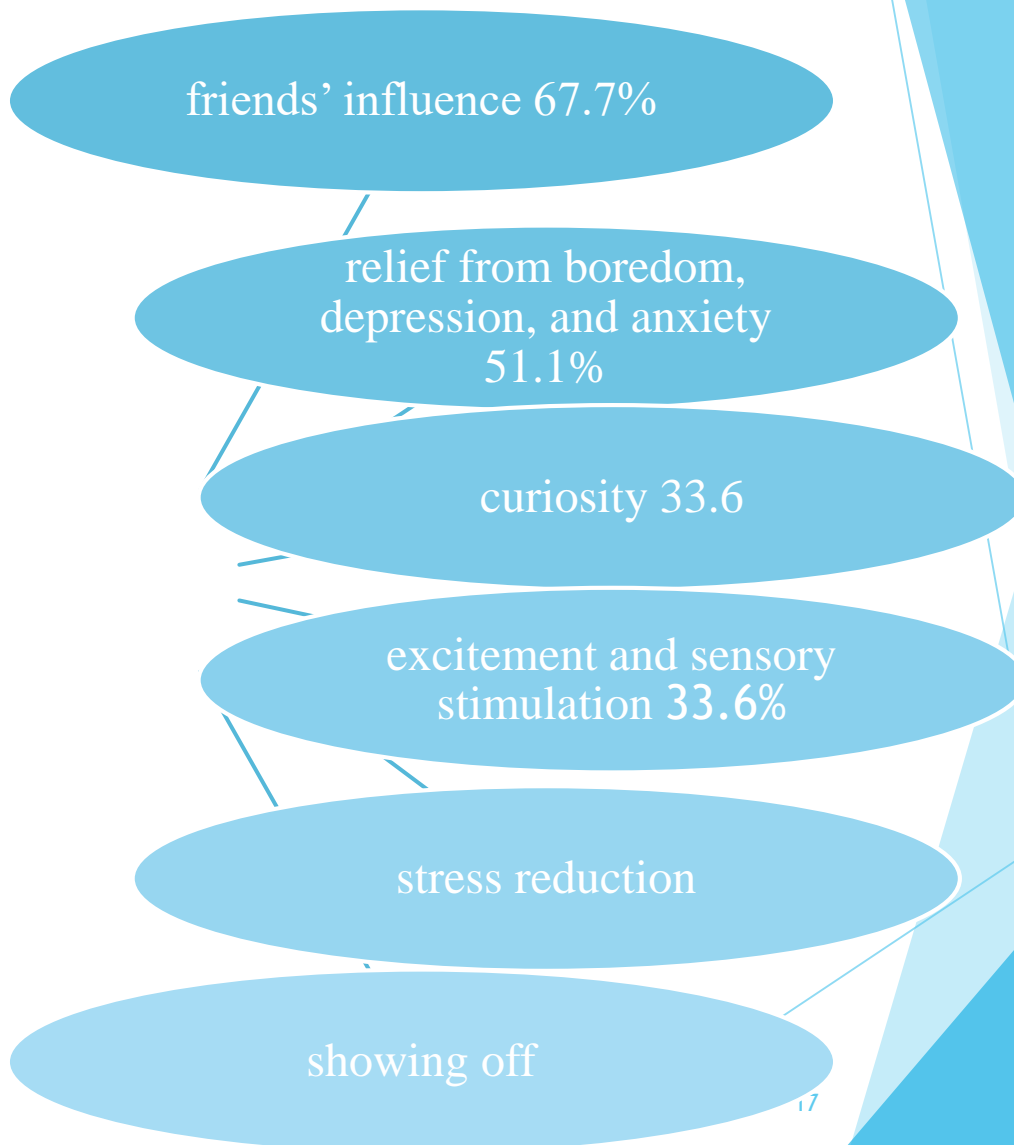
# Drug Abuse Problems in Youths

- ▶ Using 2009 calculations based on data from the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA, 2015), Hong Kong had 3,359 drug abusers under the age of 21.
- ▶ Approximately 80% of drug users used drugs in their own home or at their friends' homes; another 80% of student drug users had low motivation to seek help



# Drug Abuse Problems in Youths

▶ According to CRDA data in 2009, the primary causes of drug abuse among youths in Hong Kong



# Narcotics Division adopted a variety of strategies

- ▶ Publicity, preventive education and strengthening anti-drug hotline service
- ▶ Increased resources for outreach by social workers and the early identification of youths whose drug use was concealed
- ▶ Support of the family members

# Internet Addiction

- ▶ In the past 10 years, another problem of great concern to society, parents, and scholars is internet addiction among youth.
- ▶ The research of various scholars has shown an **increase both in internet addiction** in youths and in **the negative effects of internet addiction**, such as its effects on daily life and parental conflict caused by the children's addiction to the internet and the parents' worry about the internet's impact on their children's mental health (Against Child Abuse, 2004; Chan, 2004; Shek, Tang, & Lo, 2008).

# Internet Addiction

- ▶ A 2012 study by Caritas Hong Kong had found that the number of hidden youths in Hong Kong continued to increase.
- ▶ Problems in learning adaptation, interpersonal relationships, and poor performance were more prone to occur to youths in or below Form 3, leading to long absences from school and a preference for staying at home and relying on the computer, resulting in children becoming hidden youths (Hong Kong Daily News, 2012)

# Internet Addiction

Intervention of manage internet addiction behavior among youths in the following areas:

- ▶ youths themselves (defeating thinking)
- ▶ interpersonal relationships (influence among friends)
- ▶ family intervention (loose parenting)
- ▶ society (internet addiction culture)

(Shek, Tang, & Lo, 2009)

# Improving Youth Mental Health

- ▶ Reviewing the concepts of mental illness treatment and rehabilitation in the past and more recently, the conception of mental illness based on the biopsychosocial vulnerability-stress model is closely related to physiological, psychological, and social factors that mutually influence one another

(F. K. Wong, 2007)

- ▶ In the concept of rehabilitation guided by recovery that has been advocated in recent years, workers were encouraged to help patients with mental illness find personal hope and meaning in life and enhancing their autonomy

(Anthony, W.A.,1993)

# Holistic Wellness Model

- ▶ In term of improving youths' mental health , past research primarily focused on either illness or the concept of individual rehabilitation.
- ▶ This presentation also proposes a family-based intervention model because family is an important pillar of youth mental health.
- ▶ The family plays an important role in prevention, early intervention, and the treatment and rehabilitation process related to the adolescent mental issues as mentioned above particular to Hong Kong eastern cultural society.

The below table shows good health, the beginning of illness, illness and rehabilitation, along with the key direction at various points to promote mental health in youths.

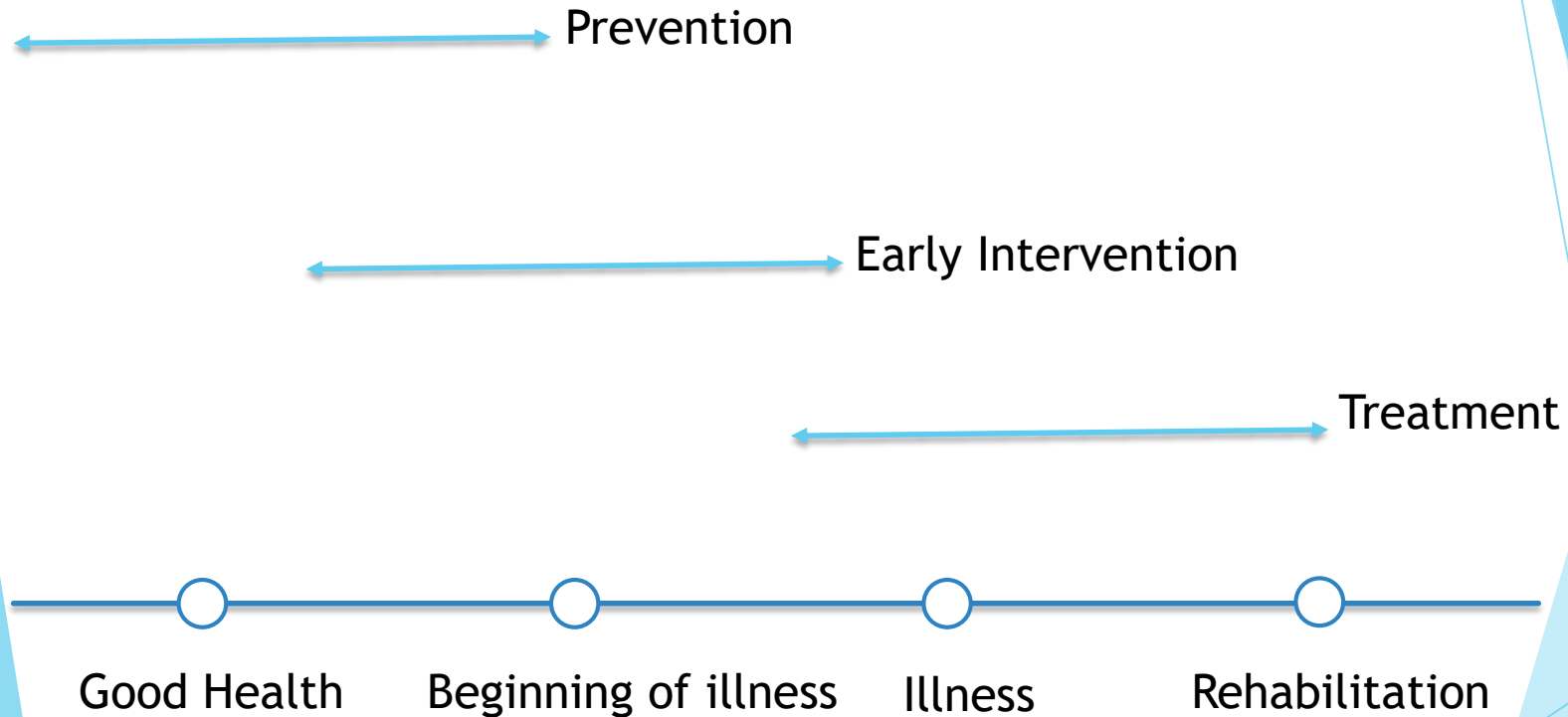


Figure 1. Improving the mental health of youths.



# Holistic Wellness Model

## Early intervention

- ▶ Early intervention is very important; the chance of rehabilitation is also great.
- ▶ Promoting community education, discrimination and misunderstanding can be reduced
- ▶ Enhancing knowledge of mental health problems, manage mental health problems, and learn how to seek help
- ▶ Medical services need to increase resources, provide effective support

# Holistic Wellness Model

## Continuing to Receive Medical Treatment and Actively Participating in a Recovery Plan

It is very important for youths who are already ill to actively seek treatment, accept appropriate drug therapy, and continue with follow-up appointments. Typically, patients would reduce medication on their own, stop taking medication, or stop follow-up appointments; these actions would hinder treatment progress and increase the possibility of patient relapse.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## Prevention Direction

Adopting from a holistic concept of health (Ewles & Simnett, 1985)

- ▶ Holistic well-being, which involves paying close attention to youths' physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and family-based development.
- ▶ With respect to relationships with the environment, in addition to family and social groups, schools and medical treatment are included. All of these factors become elements of prevention and intervention.

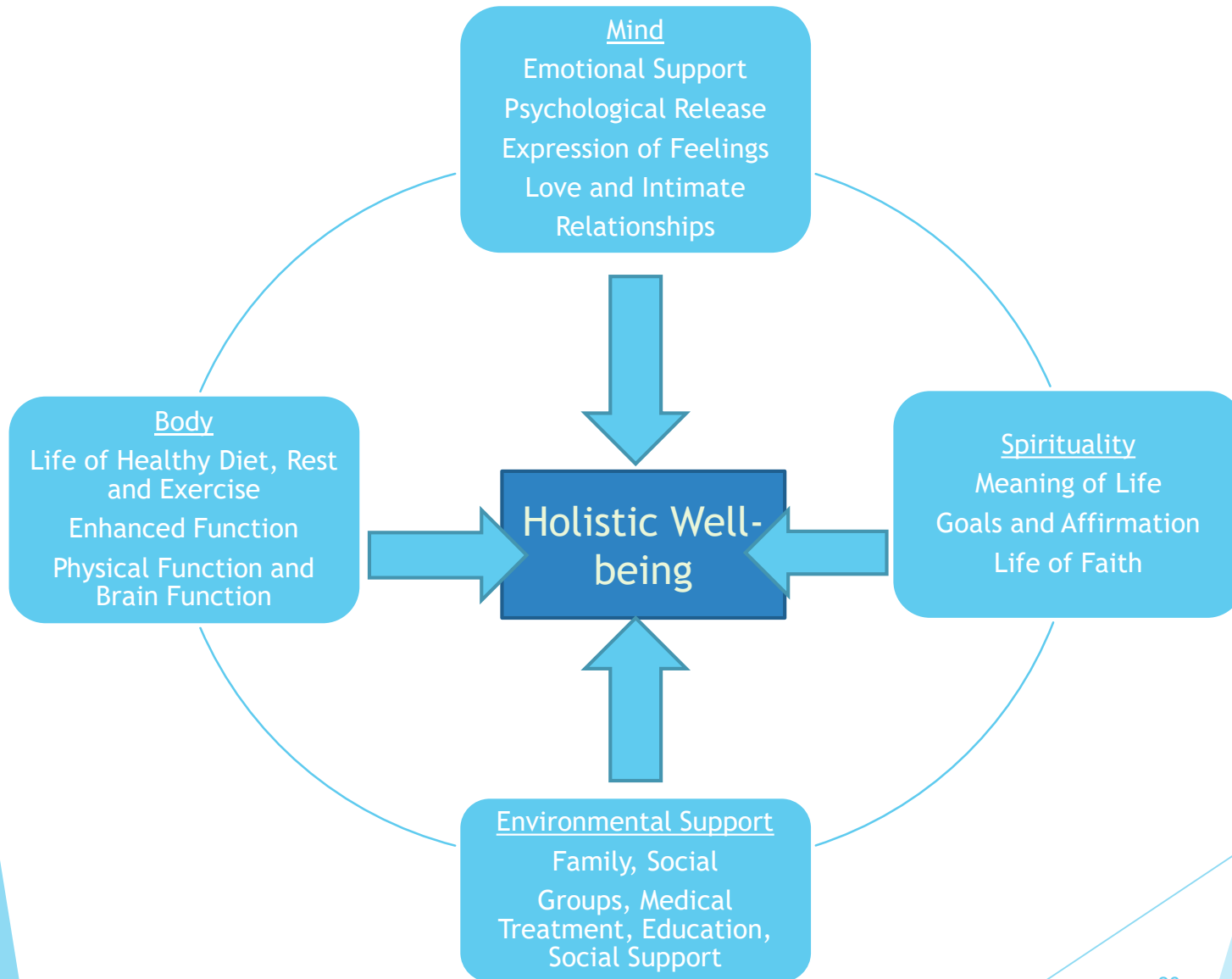


Figure 3. Intervention routes of Holistic Wellness Model

# Holistic Wellness Model

## ► Physical health

Physical health is an important condition for happiness. Physical health is having physical strength and physique and a state of good physiological functioning. Healthy diet, exercise and sleep habits and a relaxed body are also manifestations of physical health. Healthy daily living patterns and proper recreation and rest are worth promoting. Appropriate opportunities for youths to play which can provide them with the ability to learn new skills, improve problem solving, practice self-control, and promote creativity.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## ▶ Psychological health

Psychological health refers to an efficient and satisfactory sustainable state under which a person can adapt well and have vitality in life, i.e., cognition, emotional willpower, ideal behavioral coordination, and the ability to adapt to society. Psychological health is not only a state but also an inherent capacity for peace of mind, light-heartedness, and vitality, along with the ability to have congenial interpersonal relationships, maintain enthusiasm for life, and build intimate relationships.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## ▶ Spiritual health

Spiritually healthy people can grasp belief or faith, set goals in life, have the ability to love and be loved, feel life's joys, and seek personal meaning in life. Young people can establish goals for living and build meaningful goals in life through self-exploration and by thinking about the true meaning of life. Meanwhile, they can cultivate confidence and faith in healthy living by nurturing a positive attitude toward life. Furthermore, inquiries related to the nature of life and the meaning of living can help young people reflect deeply, prompting them to establish meaningful goals in life.

# Holistic Wellness Model

- ▶ Environmental support (family, social groups)
  - Environmental support, like support from family members and friends, is indispensable. In the previous sections that explored the mental health problems of youths, we can see that the role of the family or parents is very important.
  - Social services also need to provide assistance
  - Teachers and parents' attention to mental health can also be enhanced through school curriculum and activities.



# Holistic Wellness Model

Areas for improvement in policy level:

## Family Policy Promotion

- ▶ Appropriate measures should be formulated from a family-friendly perspective, including
  - ▶ promoting psychological health for youths
  - ▶ establishing good communication and relationships with family members
  - ▶ providing family education on preventing suicidal behavior.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## Education Policy

- ▶ Policy can focus on the lack of rest time for youths due to heavy homework pressure.
- ▶ In addition, in-depth study and analysis should be conducted on youths' universally lower resilience so that methods of enhancing their resilience can be formulated.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## Medical Treatment Policy

- ▶ Young people who suffer from depressive or anxious emotions and other symptoms wait an excessively long time for diagnosis and treatment.
- ▶ The recommendation is to strengthen psychological health treatment and counseling services for youths in the health-care system to provide early intervention and appropriate treatment.

# Holistic Wellness Model

## Social Service Policy

- ▶ The government has not yet provided relevant funding to address the unique service needs of adolescent mental health, particularly mental health services. Existing integrated community centers for mental wellness provide only general mental health services.

Family Policy  
Promotion

Education Policy

**Policy Level**

Medical  
Treatment Policy

Social Service  
Policy

# Conclusion

- ▶ It is hoped that a more comprehensive perspective can be adopted to address youth mental health issues through caring for adolescents' physical, psychological, social, and spiritual health and using a family-based intervention wellness model which we also here called as a Holistic Wellness Model.

- ▶ The achievement of this result depends on early identification and intervention by various communities and groups, strengthening family support systems, establishing peer support networks, improving community rehabilitation services, and actively promoting community education to facilitate healthy development of youths and enable them to live meaningful and rich lives.

- ▶ This presentation attempts to discuss youth mental health problems in Hong Kong and ways to improve the mental health of youths in the hopes of attracting more attention from both scholars and the public. There is a need for more in depth research and discussion of this intervention model in terms of actual program and service measures.





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